

Photo Story 3 for Windows



: Photo Story 3
for Windows

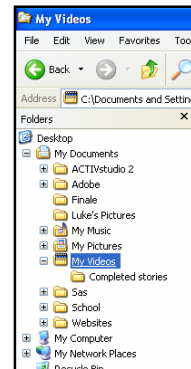
Photo Story 3 is a free program download available on the Microsoft website. When installed (on Windows XP only) it will enable you to make short videos using digital photos and images, create a voice-over and add a music track. (Use the search facility on www.microsoft.com)

The program is similar to Video Maker (another free Windows XP application for creating short videos from digital video, photos and images) but only makes use of still images (like digital photos). It contains powerful editing options for a free program, allowing you to zoom in or traverse photos, create a voice-over and compose your own sound track! It is a **wizard-driven** program that takes you through steps to create your own video, and has the freedom to save projects and return to them at a later date to complete or amend your work.

Before you start

It is advisable to decide which photos or images you want to use in your project before you start. Use 'My Computer' (the Windows file management application) to find the photos you want to use. Make a note of their filenames. You could create a file, name it and copy the photos to this new file. This is recommended way of working with the students to speed things up.

It is also useful to know that when you finish or want to save your project the program automatically saves it in the 'My Videos' file in 'My Documents' area. You can specify where you want to save your project if you want to save it in another folder.

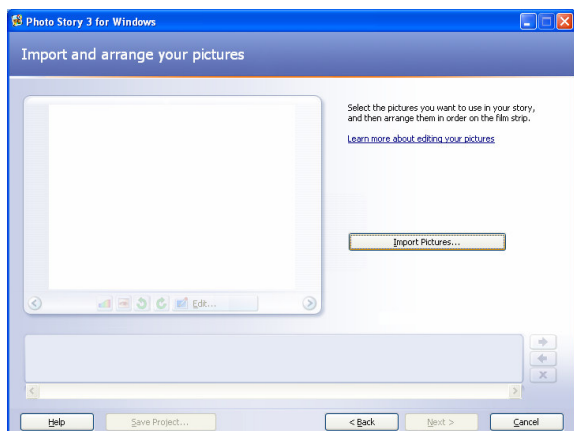


Follow the wizard...



Start with the default option, 'Begin a new story' Select 'Next' at the bottom right corner of the dialogue box.

It is interesting to note that you cannot maximise the wizard dialogue boxes to fill the screen. It always remains the same size. You can move it round the screen (if you wish) by clicking on the blue bar at the top, holding the mouse button down and dragging it around the screen (clicking and dragging).



Select 'Import pictures...' and locate the file where you put the photos you want to use.

You can import a photo and then another by following the instructions or you can select more than one photo at a time in the same file by holding down the **Ctrl** key and clicking the photos you want to use.

To start with import only three photos! This will enable you to complete the training within 30 minutes.

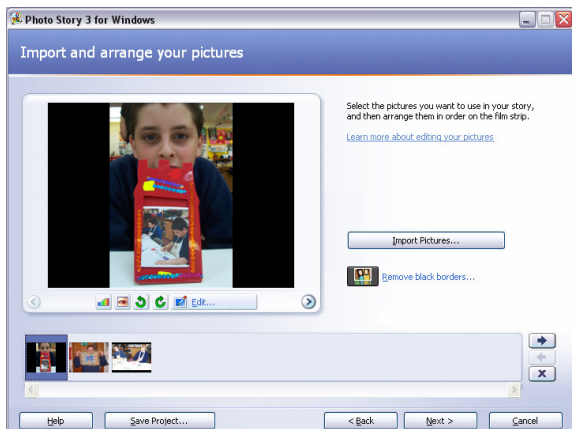
When you have chosen all your images select 'OK'. The wizard screen will now have changed...

Editing the photos

You can remove the black border, alter the colour or contrast balances, remove 'red-eye', change the orientation or crop photos. For more information select the 'Learn more about editing your pictures' option on the dialogue box.

I always try to get rid of the black border so that the picture fills the screen but this may not always be possible in order to keep all the important parts of the photo.

When you have finished editing one photo, select another by clicking on the next photo once and edit it if necessary. When you are happy with all the photos, select the 'Next' button to go to the next stage.



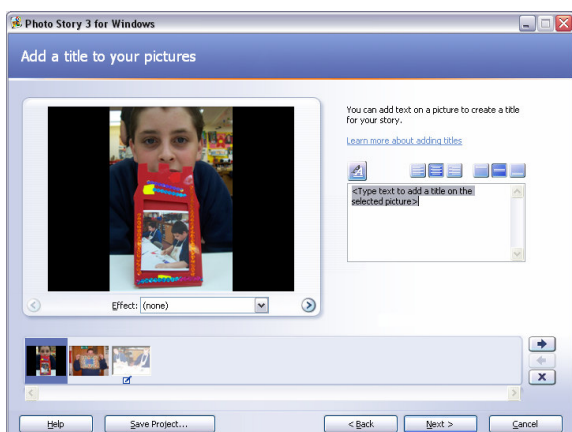
Add text or titles to photos

You can choose the font, size and colour and where the text goes on the screen.

Design hint: Remember that a dark background needs a light coloured text to enable it to be read with ease. It is possible to continue making changes until you are happy with the results.

Just one question though: Do you need a title on each page?

Select 'Next' when you have made all the necessary changes.

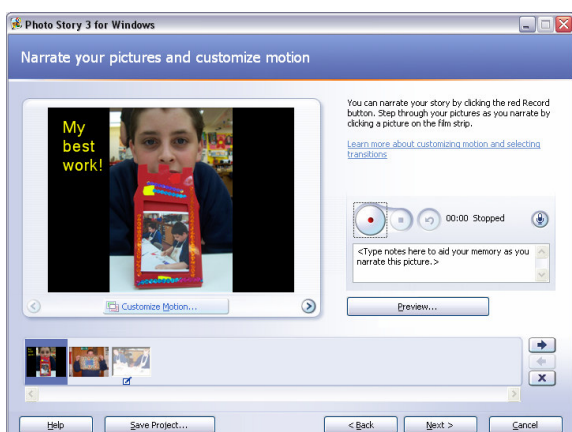


Add your own voice-over!

(Ensure that your microphone is attached properly. If it is not set up/configured you can do this by clicking on the small microphone icon on the middle right of the dialogue box)

Click the red (dot) record button and speak into the microphone. Click the blue (square) stop button when finished. Remember to add a voice over for each slide.

You can add written notes as a planning or memory tool. It is a good idea to rehearse the narration first. You can delete it if you make a mistake and then try again.

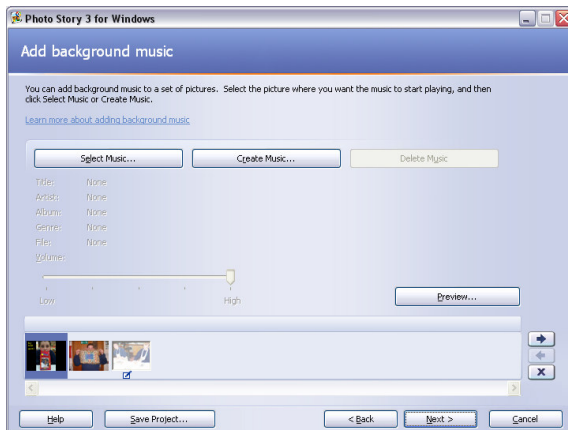


Preview...

At this stage you can preview your 'story' or video. Underneath the recording box is a long rectangular button labelled 'Preview...'. Click it once see and hear the video you have created so far.

Saving...

You can save your work at any time. At the bottom left of the dialogue box is a button marked 'Save Project...'. Remember to use a filename that will identify whose work it is and the content. You can now revisit this project at any time to amend, add to or edit. Remember that it is automatically saved in the 'My Videos' folder in 'My Documents'.

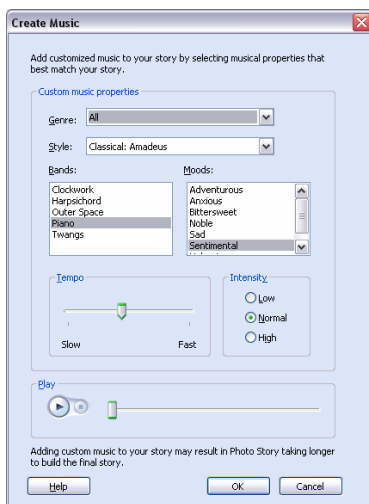


Add the background sound track

If you have a piece of music or song you want to use as a background mood click the 'Select Music...' button.

The open music dialogue box will ask you find the music on the computer. It will automatically chop the music so that it is the right length for the video.

Or select the 'Create Music...' button.



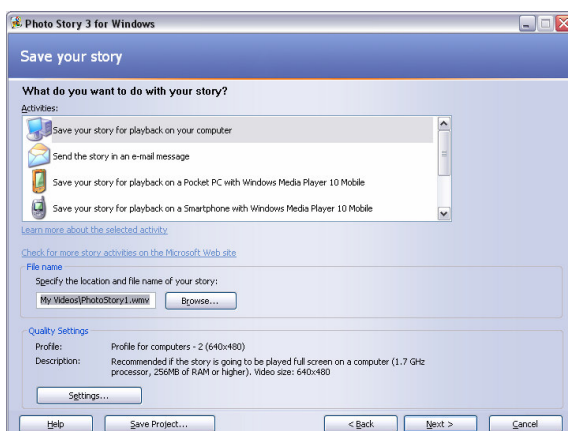
Roll over, Beethoven!

This is great fun! Create your own music! Choose from 13 different genres, 51 different styles, a choice of 5 or 6 instrument groups (bands), 7 moods, 3 intensities and you have control of the tempo (speed) too!

Admittedly, the sounds are not the most realistic but who cares! It's background noise to help set the mood of your video and it's fun!

Your composition is automatically played for the length of the video (as long as the first slide was selected when you selected the Create Music option)

Of course, you could choose to have no music...



Choosing a format – purpose and size!

This dialogue box asks you to decide what you want to do with your finished video. Mostly, I imagine, they will be played back on computers so the first option is the most appropriate. The program will then render the video with the appropriate settings and save it to your computer.

You do have some control of the settings and can vary them if desired... See the 'Settings...' button near the bottom left hand corner.

You can also tell the computer where you would like your completed video stored and what filename you want to give it. Select the 'Browse...' button to make any changes or just to see where the computer is going to store it!

The finished videos can be given to the students to take home to show their parents and carers by storing them on a CD. By changing the settings and saving them as smaller files they can be sent by email to their friends and relatives or put up on the school website as examples of good work.



The final dialogue box shows you the choices you made: the filename, location and size of your completed video.

Here you can also save the project to alter it later if you need to make changes.

You can see your final product by clicking the 'View your story' option.

How to use Photo Story...some suggestions

This is a good way of using digital photos or images of any digital kind. This program is easy to get to know or can be set up easily so that the editing can be done within time limits. Of course, there needs to be time inbuilt to allow students to gain the skills necessary and become familiar with the workings of the program.

With the tasks broken down into steps you could prepare files for students to complete, differentiation is inbuilt with students starting the project at appropriate stages of the process.

I feel that it could be an ideal tool to aid assessing student's understanding of concepts and bodies of knowledge. Freeing our students from the labour of writing sentences, the voice-over tool will enable them to record and express ideas and show understanding.

Some ideas:

- Prepare a folder with a selection of photos following a visit
- Prepare a project already containing images for students to complete
- Prepare a worksheet with texts to match a prepared project
- Students provide voice-over to accompany prepared images to illustrate a story (creative imagination, event in history, maths concepts ("Here is 20p made up of...", "The clock is showing..."), steps in a process (DT, Art, Food Studies)...

Suggested examples of student performance indicating understanding of learning objectives:

Some (more able) students will:

- select 3 or 4 appropriate images
- add appropriate text to each image
- add a short narration to explain a feature of the image
- create an appropriate mood music background

Most students will:

- add a title to each image (choosing from a list given)
- add a short voice-over explaining what is in each image
- create an appropriate mood music background

Some (less able) students will:

- add a title to each image (choosing from a list given)
- add a short voice-over for all/some images
- create an appropriate mood music background